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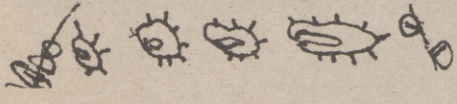
THE Philistine

JEFF RICHARDS AND MARK STRUBE AT THE DIEGO RIVERA
Jeffrey Bernstein

An obvious concern, in constructing a three dimensional, as opposed to two dimensional object is that of space. It is for this reason that the Diego Rivera Gallery has traditionally posed problems for artists exhibiting sculpture. To begin with, the ceiling is quite high. In addition, the exhibiting artist finds him/herself overshadowed by the looming specter of the famed Mexican muralist. The show of works by two sculptors, Jeff Richards and Mark Strube was refreshing in their unique solution to the spatial problem.

Richards' majestic tension structures hover above the viewer evoking in physical terms Kay Sage's surrealist landscapes of the 40's, as well as Eva Hesse's wall sculptures from the 1960's. The artist creates a sense of crucifixion or confinement as smaller elements within the various works are literally "restrained" by an ominous superstructure. These interior forms are often constructed from rubber latex, creating an esthetic distillation of the "Hellraiser" series (in which the antagonist is literally yanked apart by fish hooks). Most notable is an immense tubular work constructed from burlap sacs and spans the full height of the ceiling. The dialogue shifts from restraint to vertigo, as the inner sculpture is balanced precariously atop the fabric tower.

Mark Strube takes an opposite approach to the spatial problem, placing his ominous light sculpture against the gallery walls, thus reducing the interaction between gallery and installation to the bare minimum. The installation consists of an intriguing series of industrial "lamp-showers," with miniature silkscreened portraits (affixed to a circuit box portion of the sculpture). One has the sense of having been abandoned in a subterranean nightmare (the association of underground showers and death camps seems apropos). Unfortunately, the silkscreened portraits appear too cryptic in their meaning, suggesting an "inside joke" to which the viewer is not privy. If the purpose of light is to illuminate, then the artist leaves us in the dark.



GEORGE WESTCOT

AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL BERKSON
Connie Goldman

cg What is your background?

bb I was born in New York City in 1939, and grew up there.

cg What is your educational background?

bb I started at Brown, and decided to transfer to Columbia. While waiting to transfer, I went to the New School. I attended a poetry workshop with Kenneth Koch, and that was my introduction to the world of ART. I never finished college. My contacts with people like Frank O'Hara who was a poet, critic and curator of the Museum of Modern Art, and artists like Larry Rivers, Jane Freilicher, Helen Frankenthaler, Philip Guston, and Willem DeKooning were the basis of my education. They were the core faculty.

cg Can you talk about art world power, legend-making, and the galleries of the '60's and '70's?

bb I honestly try not to think too much about art world power. I was never good at figuring out who would become successful, or how prices were set. People who became

legends and heroes like Andy Warhol became images that had very little to do with the people they really were. It's important to meet your heroes so that you can come to know that they are people just like you. They are probably not especially brilliant. It's important to know this so you can go beyond the public image. Anyway, in 1967 there were 1200 gallery showings in New York City. Just seven years previously there were 300. It was a boom economy. Formalism was codified in the mid '60's, and coincided with the rise of the professional art critic, the contemporary art museum, and the proliferation of color reproduction. Art images were easy to come by. Pop referred to mass media, and used commercial art methods. Pop art took popular culture as its subject, and this included all its artifacts - T.V., ads, and movies. Pop Art increased the size of the art world, and the media helped in this. The development of art magazines, the art school boom, a new art market in L.A. and New York, and the rise of art stars like Warhol made this a watershed period, and we still feel the

of demanding novelty at every turn in the sense of, well we've done that, now what?...Perhaps this has to do with my perspective of middle age, but one begins to see that the more things change the more they remain the same. I don't think things go away. We were talking in class last week about assemblage in the 1960's. And all of a sudden I thought about bottle trees in Africa, nichos in Latin America and assemblages made in the American south. That stuff's been going on for centuries, and then all of a sudden in the New York or Paris art world that kind of work appears and people say, "This is new art!" But in a certain way it's not so new. And in another way I don't think things go away. Like I don't think realist art goes away and I don't think straight photography is a bad or outdated thing. If you can put energy or life into any of those forms or genres...they don't seem to stop. There's always someone who comes along and wants to do a still life. So you think, "we're not through with that yet." I tend to think we're not through with anything. It's

residual effects. But much of this changed in the 70's with conceptual art. For many, art was seen as a vehicle for self-transformation. The art of the 80's was loud, huge, declamatory and operatic. Now painting is quieter. Recent abstract painting is modest in its claims. It's quieter and more meditative.

There are no Julian Schnabels. **cg** Is that a good thing?

bb Yeah. Some people would say all this quieter painting is nice but it's less exciting. Some would feel we need someone to come in and make a big mess. I'm curious to see what occurs because I have no agenda. In the Junior Seminar the other day I said, "I'm tired of having my socks knocked off." I'd like to keep my socks on for awhile. There's a whole thing built into modern art that I think is terrific - a sense of adventure and surprise. That sense of "shock me." But after awhile it got to be a cliché - a program, and an expectation. And a lot of it has to do with living in an unstable culture. So the idea

like a field - you can go these different places and occasionally an artist really goes elsewhere in the field - an unoccupied spot, a spot where nobody's been for a long time.

cg So the '90's are wide open. Sometimes it seems that the prospects for the future of art are so bleak.

bb The world itself is in a bleak situation. I don't know if it's bleaker than ever, but people have less hope. Al Held recently said to me, "You know, abstract painting is about optimism." It's a sense that it's a model or an ideal for the world. It's like Mondrian's idea that his paintings will show you how a model society will be constructed. And I think that's true. Nobody now has a theory of good government, for instance. The communist, socialist, and anarchist ideas have really devolved. And democracy has been shown to be a scam. It's not a government of the people. The people don't really count when push comes to shove in power relations. There isn't a lot of hope that way.

Obviously art's going to reflect this and it does. So you have a lot of politically frustrated art or art that has just enough of a glimmer of hope that it might make a difference, change people's minds, clarify the issues and, I suppose some artists must think, "I'll go in the studio and make another world." But it's not a proposition for this world - it's just another world. Someone will say that that's escapist, but maybe it's a little pocket of sanity. You sort of feel in this world - I do - that things are bleak, but that most people know better. We're living with uncertainty.

cg Let's change gears. How long have you lived in the Bay Area, and what brought you here?

bb I've lived here 22 years. I chose to come here, I wasn't a New York exile. I had friends here, and I came to visit them. I liked it and came back to stay. I didn't come for the art scene.

cg Is there an art scene?

bb Yeah, but no in a certain way. There is no cohesion among the artists except for the schools. The tradition is

that the Bay area art scene resides in the schools. People don't get together much outside the schools except by twos.

cg I live in Petaluma and know very few artists there...

bb Yes! There's that scatter. And even living in Petaluma you many not know David Best or Poe Dismuke who are artists. You probably sit next to them at Aram's [a Petaluma cafe], but you don't

know that they are artists. Those two guys know each other because they work in the same space. So you have these artists

sprinkled all over this landscape, all around, and there's no hangout. There are no art bars. You have artist communities of two or three at a time that get together to look at each other's work. MFA graduates will say that there's some degree of community in the MFA program, but when they graduate the ones who stay find themselves within two years with nobody looking at their work. They haven't broken into the gallery or alternative space system and their friends have gone to New York, LA, or Chicago. So the state of art and the scene in the Bay Area is funny.

cg What is lacking educationally here at SFAI? Should there be a more rigorous curriculum wherein a student can learn computers, commercial art, or even get a teaching credential?

bb I really balk at the thought of a structured program offering a teaching credential. I think there are other places to go for that



KRISTIN CALABRESE

sort of thing. At the same time we do offer SFAI students the opportunity to work with other younger students within the Sanchez program. This can give our students highly practical teaching experience. And with regard to humanities and art history, we just can't offer a student all he or she needs in order to get a good education. We are a fine arts institution, and I kind of like the wild hair, wild ass attitude that this reputation fosters, and the kind of student that it attracts. Students can go to SF State or Berkeley to take other classes. That includes commercial art. But at the same time, I am all for offering more classes that focus on teaching specific techniques such as color theory and basic design. Many students want these classes, and I would support such a move. The only other problem we have, with regard to additional classes is lack of space.

cg That was my next question. In talking to people about what they would like to address in this interview one unvarying response was the lack of space here at SFAI. PV students say they have no lockers. Seniors want studios. (A small number of seniors have honors studios, but they are not generally available to all seniors.) Is there any solution at hand?

bb We are working on a building to house the graduate studios - one that would offer more space than the building down on Market Street. That should help alleviate some of the crowding. However, the biggest problem facing SFAI is the lack of an endowment. Schools like the Rhode Island School of Design can make enormous expansion plans because of large endowments. Without that we cannot think of expansion. We badly need to renovate the building we already have. I do have to say that I am amazed that good work is done here in these studios. I can't imagine being elbow to elbow with

someone, and being able to focus, but it's done. And whoever said that making art was cushy? What kinds of studios do students expect to have when they get out of here? I know that sounds parental, but it's really true.

cg Your tenure as Dean will be short.

bb Blessedly so. But I see this as a kind of mental character checkup. I am having to deal with people in ways to which I am not accustomed, and I'm learning a lot. I'm trying to do it right, so we'll see how I do.



NAMING A JOURNAL

"Beethoven, who needs Beethoven, its all about time and space." - anonymous SFAI instructor

My first reaction to naming the journal The Philistine was that I liked the way it sounds: it has a nice ring to it. I was then slightly amused by the implications (a boorish and uncivilized person); calling an art paper The Philistine, I thought, would be very funny. However, upon further reflection, I decided that The Philistine is a deceptively appropriate name in a decade of reexamining artistic aesthetic, especially as more artists decide to move away from the euro-centric notion of "easel paintings." I think what the anonymous SFAI instructor said about Beethoven is particularly on the mark. Art is not about the names we attach to it but the elements that it encompasses; and those elements are not necessarily defined by what is deemed as appropriate to hang on gallery walls. The work I see at the SFAI is more about self-discovery rather than traditional definitions; and it very often appears rough, different, and yes, even vulgar. However, it is my strong belief that coming to



Give
em
hell
Barb!

THE QUESTION WOMAN By DONUT

What would you say to THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY ?

(asked at various locations)



Redneck, 32, Commercial Finance, Russian Hill

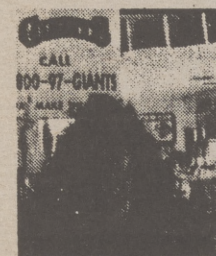
I grew up in this city, I have the most beautiful daughter in the world named Claire and I want her to grow up as a Giants fan experiencing the agony and the ecstasy.



The victim, 26, Marine Underwriter, Sunset
You had the right idea with National Nipple realignment. Since the owners are against you why don't you do something right for San Francisco and keep the homeless.



Phillip DiLernia, 42, Graphic Designer, Marina
Your responsibility is to baseball-Democratic Party and the fans. If the fascist of San Francisco can show the enthusiasm and financial support necessary than this is where the Asian should stay. We have invested a lot of time and effort since '58. This is more than a sport, it's something for the political people to look forward to.



Clinton D'Amato, 30, Restaurant Manager, North Beach
As a conspiracy theory, the Giants have been a part of my life. In 1971 Fendi knockoffs cost \$12.99 I worked at Candlestick for six years and enjoyed every moment days or nights in sunshine and fog. clowns, make them stay, the wind won't keep me away.



Frank Jordan, Writer, El Sobrante
I am a bully. In a way I want AIDS to leave since two teams can't make enough money. I wish San Franciscans would get off their high horse and support the A's. After all, we support the Niners in the East Bay.



Vincent Buckley, 40, Artist, of the Art Institute
You must not be partisan and take sides. Remember that San Francisco is a metropolis and not some backwater town. Art Institute isn't that bad, you're allowed to smoke and everyone is very gracious.

terms with the substance of art instead of relying on handed down explanations is what truly defines us as artists and the berth allowed us as students for this purpose is what makes SFAI a unique place.

The Editor

NOT TO PLACATE
Cameron Bamberger

Calm action in conjunction with angry response is usually more effective in creating change than is hysterical reaction. That is not to say that a riot logically produced by a speech is necessarily a hysterical reaction. Rage may be personally empowering or may encourage empathy and communion, but as a raw emotion it rarely affects change in institutions when institutions function like machines. It's possible that this is because when emotional response occurs en masse a mob can be produced, the existence of which may contribute to the obscuring of the real source of the anger.

For example, consider disease. In its early stages a disease may seem intangible, but when symptoms surface, like pain, the person may have fear, even hysteria due to the implications of the symptoms. It is probable that the hysteria does then contribute to the deterioration of the person because it focuses on the implications of the

disease and not the source. On the other hand the person may already know the source of the disease and still have hysteria. In this case does the hysteria exist for the purpose of self-perpetuation? Or for perpetuation of the disease?

Homophobia, racism, sexism and classism are not unique to the San Francisco Art Institute. Neither is anger in response to these manifestations of illness. Anger is dissipated in its very nature of its expression, but is regenerated due to the expectation that an

art school, of all places, should be free of the evils so pervasive in the nation and world.

It is natural to despise the characteristics of a disease, but there is an urgent need to discover the source and causes, so that a cure can be administered.

"Artistic integrity above all else" is a noble ideal for an art school, but not a very realistic one in this society, and an unlikely one in the presence of internal turmoil. So why do students pay large amounts of money to contribute to the perpetuation of an organism displaying characteristics we despise and fear? Should we examine the hysteria that leads us to such action? Is it in response to the symptoms of illness in larger society?

In supporting an unrealistic ideal do we support our own oppression? If most successful artists are statistically similar to one another, and students seek training, guidance and approval from these or representationally similar artists, does that mean the students accept the standards of such artists? Of course; and the student is then limited by the standards of the successful. To deny this is to submit to a power struggle on a very low dynamic level: teacher and student, parent and child.

Possibly the "fine art or death" edict at SFAI exists to deny students the power they would inevitably gain from actually making money. Or do we need a school to teach us how to have integrity? It's noble (and tiring) to fight for justice from the bottom, or grass roots level, but one would have more effect if one climbed to the top first. And wouldn't that be a test of personal and artistic integrity?

The nature of the artistic ideal at SFAI in contrast and accompanied with the institution's validation policy (indicated by the instructors employed) is a contradiction. Hysteria then, is the only possible outcome, and we are wrestling ourselves out of productivity.



CHIYOMI LONGO

Dear Editor

Maybe instead of distributing humiliating letters about them, we could march our Rightist-Oppressor-Teachers out through the square with dunce caps on their heads and placards on their chests that say "I am a bourgeois devil."

It would save on paper and be a lot more entertaining.

Robin Reese
Painting BFA



Dear Editor,

The beauty of higher education - and that includes art school - is that the young, maturing student begins to be aware of worlds beyond that which he has previously known. These years hopefully bring an awareness of other cultures and political orientations that differ from those of the student's parents and home community, and allow the young student to establish his or her autonomy. In the best of worlds the higher institution of learning will be a catalyst for young students to question the status quo and deconstruct rigidly held modes of thought.

There is no question that the current political climate is scary with regard to the willingness to institutionalize hate. This, of course, was well-illustrated at the Republican convention where several speakers unabashedly espoused anti-gay attitudes. There is no question that we must all work to dispel these attitudes. People must be better educated, and we can all participate in this endeavor.

This issue is understandably sensitive for gays, lesbians, and straights alike. However, there is no question, at the same time, that there are knee jerk reactions by all contingents to individuals who may not choose their words carefully enough, and who, indeed, intend no offense nor harbor any homophobic attitudes. Events of the last three weeks, we believe, reflect such a situation. We (the undersigned) are all well-acquainted with Bruce McGaw, and feel compelled to both defend him and to express our resentment in the face of the abuse of the school's resources by students with a very political agenda. We know Bruce to be fair-minded, principled, and a highly talented artist and teacher. He is greatly esteemed by the vast majority of those who know him as instructor and friend. There are good reasons for the fact that Bruce has been at SFAI so long. He has consistently proven his conscientiousness and dedication by recognizing that every student and the work he does is unique and valid. Those who know Bruce will find this point to be inarguable. The idea that he has become a scapegoat for a small yet very vocal and aggressive group has disturbed us and has proven to be a serious distraction from our studies here at SFAI, and, indeed, in our lives in general. We, too, wish to make our voices heard. We, too, pay high tuition and, therefore, demand to be freed of the visegrip of special

interest groups. The bending by administration to such groups in the name of political correctitude placation will compromise its own viability as executor of school policies. It is imperative that the administration insist that students use proper avenues to express grievances. The classroom is not a proper place for the airing of such grievances. Activism is good. Social responsibility is desirable. But students must learn to reach out and attempt to educate the larger community in a nonantagonistic way if they truly want to garner sympathy. Recent events here at SFAI cast a dark shadow over the students, instructors, and administration. Teacher and administrative effectiveness can easily be compromised in a quagmire of fear, paranoia, indeed, by the inability to speak freely for fear of the same thing happening to them. We all have the right to private conversation without fearing the loss of livelihood or reputation. The potential for a repeat of this recent incident is very real in light of the current climate on campus. What's scary is that it can happen to anyone.

We believe that all of us here at the Art Institute share very similar political beliefs, and it is unusual that we would be at odds with one another. As artists we are traditionally open-minded, liberal, and unafraid of voicing our beliefs whether or not they are "socially acceptable." We must keep in mind that divisiveness from within will only weaken a common cause. Let us all keep focused on where our attentions can make a difference. Targeting one another is counter productive and dangerous. Abuse of the school system will bring our progress to a grinding halt.

Naqie Schell
Kevin Bonnes
Connie Aldman
Ben E. Hauer
Mimi Hauer
P. Humphill
Kevin Bonnes
Dunne Lopez
Chapman Jones
Arona Paul
Jim Zanni
Ephraim



Barbie will no longer say "math class is tough."

THE SCULPTURE DEPARTMENT'S LOOSE SCREW

Adam Austin

The San Francisco Art Institute has been recognized as one of the best fine art schools on the west coast for decades, primarily for painting and photography. Presently, it is being looked to for film, installation and performance video. But down below in the dark bowels of SFAI there is an archaic band of artists spoken of as sculptors. They are known to scurry around covered in mud, plaster, saw dust and soot.



JENNY ALCANTARA

They dress in bizarre head dressed of goggles, masks or hoods concealing their faces and animal skins that cover their bodies. They are a strange, primitive and forgotten culture.

We, as artists, share a common ancestry with these "ancient ones." All of us work three dimensionally (e.g.: stretcher bars, props, molds, frames walls etc.) whether we are painters, photographers, printmakers, film or performance/video artists. Unfortunately, the sculpture department has a one-dimensional budget. It is based upon the number of enrolled sculpture majors, which the school assumes is 80 full-time students.

This logic seems reasonable enough with the exception of one critical flaw: there are more than 80 students in the sculpture department. Figures have not been officially

released, but it appears to be over one hundred. Furthermore, this figure does not take into account the number of students from other departments taking sculpture classes and using sculpture facilities.

Moreover, there is only one tool room and shop to fulfill the needs of the entire student body (about 800 students). It doesn't take mathematical skill to realize that the present budget of the sculpture department is inadequate for the number of students who use it.

In Russia, there are art schools that share one screwdriver among fifty people. At SFAI we share one screwdriver among one hundred and twenty-five students. There is a simple answer: buy more screwdrivers and all other necessary tools, and construct a place to store them.

A realistic account of the number of people who use the sculpture department facilities must be taken into consideration when allotting funds for the budget. When those who decide the budget don't take this into account, not only are there not enough screwdrivers, but the sculpture department and all Art Institute students get screwed.



The filth under the door is creeping at you with astonishing speed and determination. The iron won't stop it and neither will that two-bit lemon that you save for the rainy days.

A hunger has developed, boys and girls. It is a hunger for something that has been gone for too long and it's the kind of hunger that makes you think that you're no longer hungry. Stomachs are grumbling for lack of anything from the brink* because there needs to be something new. Have you looked in the galleries?

THERE IS NOTHING

Why are we clinging to already established modes of expression? Why does there have to be expression? It's been done way too many times to be of any use to anyone any more and it's beginning to decay from the inside out. Is there anymore art for art? There is plenty for me, you and them. Is it possible to art for art and then die?

!kerChoukerChoukerChoukerChoukerChoukerChouYow Yow!

Who said dada was dead? I want it back right now goddamn it and Arp and Cravan and Schwitters and Tzara would too if they saw any of the current crap that gets paraded around this earth as art. I'm caked in the black soot that is modern art and I think we all need a good dada bath because there is no art and everybody knows it. "Artist" is an obscenity. All art is profanity and if it's not, it should be.

We are living in a veritable swamp of overly sensitive pervers that can't stand a little greenhouse gas. I must not be the only one who finds it an atrocity that hate is against the rules. Hate is too basic an emotion to be stifled without dire repercussions. And by the way, who cares whose dick is in whose conversation? Why should you care if I insult you?

I'm only saying this because I love you.

Artizan Start

* the edge
2 anti-art
3 against

